

**Newington Town Meeting on Community Safety – April 30, 2007**  
**We are all in this together**

**Common Themes**

- Violence Prevention is a partnership between parents, young people, residents, police, schools, human services, other town agencies and community organizations.
- Issues such as violence, substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, criminal behavior, bullying etc. poor school behavior and performance should not be looked at in isolation of each other.
- Improve early identification/early intervention of children at risk at all levels of education and throughout the community. Parents, schools, youth, faith community, town agencies are primary identifiers of children and families at risk at all ages.
- Consider adding social workers and more hours for student assistance counselors.
- Additional efforts should be made to include and not ostracize children particularly those who are different and those with special needs.
- Youth are important resources and should be listened to.
- School Assemblies.
- Hold focus groups with youth and adults.
- Better communication between students and school staff.
- Provide opportunities through the school wellness curriculum where students at all grade levels can talk about issues before they become bigger problems.
- Provide confidential opportunities so students can report potential problems without fear of retaliation.
- A comprehensive and coordinated approach to youth leadership development should be considered.
- Education, awareness and a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention and character building should be improved throughout all levels in the schools and community,
- A comprehensive and integrated approach to parent awareness and parenting education should be pursued as a partnership between schools, parents and town agencies (human services, parks & recreation and library).
- Communication, Communication, Communication should be improved between all segments of the community. Additional mechanisms and tools to communicate to the public should be considered.
- The parents who need to be aware and involved do not participate - how do we as a community reach out and involve them?
- Efforts to improve and re-build a sense of community and neighborhood should be pursued by all segments of the community.
- Police, schools, other town agencies should continue to improve security efforts for the schools and the community.
- Consider hiring an outside consultant to review security.
- Consider adding more security and school resource officers.
- Consider metal detectors.
- Review school dress code policy.
- Children and adults who behave inappropriately or break the law should be held accountable. Review equity of punishments and also insure people who need help are offered assistance.
- Police, schools, human services and others should provide some national, state and local statistics to identify trends and patterns of crime, health and mental health issues.
- Hold a Town Meeting each year.

(Over)

- The Youth-Adult Council by town ordinance has the representation of all segments of the community and could be strengthened as its purpose is to help the town and school with strategic planning for coordination, communication and community education and awareness regarding youth and family issues.

### **Some Suggestions**

- Youth-Adult Council should be empowered to provide a coordinated community structure to follow up on the Town Meeting concerns and suggestions.
- Enhance coordinated youth leadership development through the recent Tri-Town Youth Leadership Project to include ongoing approaches for ongoing youth input and involvement in community issues.
- Review the recent needs assessment developed by Central Connecticut Health District that included input from Police, School and Human Services and consider their recommendations.
- Review and enhance the school and town's approach to bullying prevention and respect in school, workplace and community. Insure that it is integrated and coordinated.
- The School and Town should increase two-way mechanisms and tools for communicating with the public around awareness, education and community concerns and issues.
- Develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to parenting education, awareness and support as a partnership between schools, parents and town agencies (police, human services, parks & recreation and library).
- Enhance early identification and early intervention approaches with school and community.
- Hold an annual Town Meeting as a report card on how we are doing as a community.